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United for Quality Care

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Mike Whelan, Consumer
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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening, my name is Mike Whelan and I am a Consumer-Employer from West Haven. I was one of the first Consumers on the waiver program, and I've been hiring PCAs since 2007. I'm lucky to have 3 that have been with me a long time.

Over Christmas, I got COVID, and unfortunately 2 of my PCAs got sick too. It hurts that the State of CT doesn't give them any paid sick days, and when they're sick, it's horrible. My PCA Jannell continued coming to care for me while she was sick with COVID, both because she couldn't afford NOT to work and because it's pure and simple – if they don't come, I can't get up. But because they can't afford to take a single day off, we kept passing the virus back and forth to each other.

PCA's are human beings. They need to be treated with the same dignity we demand of ourselves. They deserve sick days. They deserve health insurance and retirement security. If PCAs had health insurance and paid sick days, there would be less illness passing back and forth.

We've made some progress over the last 10 years, but we and our PCAs need a lot more. Thank you for listening.